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Viewing cable 09USNATO464, ACTION REQUEST: BALTIC CONTINGENCY PLANNING: SOME

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09USNATO464	2009-10-20 16:58	2011-08-30 01:44	SECRET//NOFORN	Mission USNATO

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.aftenposten.no/spesial/wikileaksdokumenter/article4028320.ece>

VZCZCXRO4913
OO RUEHDBU RUEHSL
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RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFSS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RUEHNO/USDELMC BRUSSELS BE PRIORITY
RHMFSS/USNMR SHAPE BE PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 USNATO 000464

NOFORN
SIPDIS

REF: A. VILNIUS 533

[1B.](#) VILNIUS 527

[1C.](#) TALLIN 309

[1D.](#) RIGA 514

[1E.](#) SECRETARY (SECTO) 007

Classified By: Ambassador Ivo Daalder. Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d).

[11.](#) (SBU) This is an action request. See paragraph 10.

[12.](#) (S/NF) SUMMARY: Leaders in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are pressing hard for NATO Article 5 contingency planning for the Baltic states. President Obama and Secretary Clinton are on record supporting such contingency planning for Allies. At the same time, however, NATO internal processes and politics make it difficult to openly carry out such planning, particularly if it would require specifying Russia as a potential threat. Nevertheless, there are possible ways to meet the substance of Baltic demands. The existing contingency plan for Poland, for example, might be modified to include the Baltics or generic plans for the use of the NATO Response Force could be exercised and certified in a manner consistent with Baltic defense. We request high-level interagency discussion of the issue to develop the substance and NATO tactics of Baltic planning and exercises. END SUMMARY

Why Baltic Contingency Planning?

[13.](#) (S/NF) As reported in refs A-D, leaders in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are pressing hard for NATO Article 5 contingency planning for the defense of the Baltics. The Administration at the highest levels is on record supporting such efforts. President Obama told NATO Secretary General Rasmussen this during the latter's September 28-29 trip to Washington. Furthermore, Secretary Clinton told her colleagues at the September 22 "Trans-Atlantic Dinner" in New York that the U.S. wants more work on Article 5 contingency plans (ref E).

The Difficulties

[14.](#) (S/NF) At the same time, the internal processes and politics of the Alliance make it unlikely that a Baltic-only Article 5 contingency plan could be developed. NATO contingency plans are designed for possible future security risks that are consistent with NATO's General Intelligence Estimate (MC 161) and NATO Ministerial Guidance. While Admiral Stavridis, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), does have the authority to generate, review and revise contingency plans based on changes in the strategic security environment, those changes to the security environment would need to be reflected in MC 161. Without a change to MC 161, SACEUR does not have the authority to develop new Article 5 contingency plans. Moreover, changes to MC 161 are not made by SACEUR. They must be agreed by the NAC.

[15.](#) (S/NF) In this case, the Baltic states clearly believe that the Russian Federation represents a future security risk and desire a contingency plan to address that risk. And therein lies the problem. While the exact content of MC 161 cannot be discussed in this message, post-Cold War NATO has consistently said that it no longer views Russia as a threat. Allies, for example, agreed to language in the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act that "NATO and Russia do not consider each other as adversaries." As we saw during the debates over the Russia-Georgia war, many Allies will take great pains to avoid even the suggestion that the Alliance and Russia are on course toward a new Cold War. Countries such as Germany are unlikely to agree changes to MC 161 that

explicitly define Russia as a potential threat, preferring instead to argue that the Alliance needs to find a way to work cooperatively with Moscow.

USNATO 00000464 002 OF 003

But Hard is Not "Too Hard"

¶6. (S/NF) Despite these difficulties, however, there are steps that can be taken to meet the substance of the Baltic demands and demonstrate the Allied commitment to their defense. As a start, SACEUR did begin conducting informal "prudent planning" efforts within his own Headquarters in the wake of the Russian-Georgian war. These efforts should continue. Furthermore, the existing NATO contingency plan for Poland is up for revision. We could explore the possibility of revising this plan to include the reinforcement/defense of the Baltics as an element of the reinforcement/defense of Poland. Indeed, this idea was first raised by the German PermRep in conversation with Ambassador Daalder. NATO also has a number of agreed generic contingency plans for the NATO Response Force (NRF), including for relatively high-end "initial entry operations." Perhaps these generic NRF plans can be exercised/certified in a manner that would be consistent with the defense of the Baltics. Finally, we could pursue a generic Article 5 Alliance-wide contingency plan which would be applicable to multiple threats.

Necessary for NATO-Russia; Expeditionary Forces

¶7. (S/NF) Baltic reassurance can not be seen in isolation. Our ability to move forward with other U.S. priorities at NATO will be affected by our ability to reassure the Baltic states. For example, our ability to maintain an Allied consensus on re-engagement with Moscow will depend on it. Furthermore, the Baltic states have made clear that if they do not feel they can trust Allies to defend them, they will have to consider developing a force structure focused on territorial defense rather than on expeditionary capabilities.

U.S. Reassurance Does Not Equal NATO Reassurance

¶8. (S/NF) The U.S. has taken a number of bilateral steps to reassure the Baltics, including tasking the U.S. European Command (which ADM Stavridis heads under his U.S.-only hat) to develop a plan for supporting NATO deterrence and defense in the Baltic region. While these efforts can be useful in supporting NATO contingency planning and reassurance efforts, if done on their own they could actually undermine our efforts to reassure the Baltic states that all NATO Allies will carry out their Article 5 commitments. Defense of the Baltics must remain a NATO Article 5 commitment, not solely a U.S. bilateral one. Unless consensus can be achieved within the Alliance to take positive steps in this direction, the Baltic states will continue to lose faith in the Alliance, undercutting a key U.S. strategic objective. Washington should not allow U.S. bilateral reassurance efforts to become an easy substitute for NATO-wide efforts.

Recommended Way Ahead

¶9. (S/NF) Ambassador Daalder has been having quiet conversations with some Allies, as well as with SACEUR, to see what might be possible. We believe that a key aspect of any approach would be to socialize the NAC on the issue through briefings by SACEUR on current plans and the extent to which they satisfy the requirement to defend Allied territory. In addition to further consideration of the ideas in para 6 above, Mission proposes the following as an initial way ahead on this issue that we should seek to set in train:

-- The Military Committee should task NATO Military Authorities to review the current family of contingency plans

to determine if they are sufficient to meet NATO's Article 5 commitments;

USNATO 00000464 003 OF 003

-- The North Atlantic Council should ask SACEUR to brief PermReps on the status of these plans and on their ability to provide for the defense/protection of Allied territory, populations, and Alliance interests;

-- SHAPE should request that each Ally assess its own national plans and national contributions in support of these plans;

-- Strategic communications/public messaging regarding NATO contingency planning would allow the Alliance to highlight its efforts to provide for the protection of Alliance territory from the range of threats;

-- Ongoing Strategic Concept discussion and seminars should be used to identify new security threats and ways to meet those threats. This process could help build consensus for new contingency planning efforts;

-- The U.S. should consider the possibility/suitability of adapting the upcoming USEUCOM bilateral exercise, "Baltic Host 2010," into a NATO deterrence and defense of the Baltic states exercise; and

-- As NATO contingency plans are developed, task the development of supporting USEUCOM contingency plans.

¶10. (S/NF) Mission requests that a NATO IPC be scheduled in the near future to discuss this issue further, with a view to developing a coherent interagency-agreed strategy on how to take forward the President's vision of contingency planning in NATO.

DAALDER